


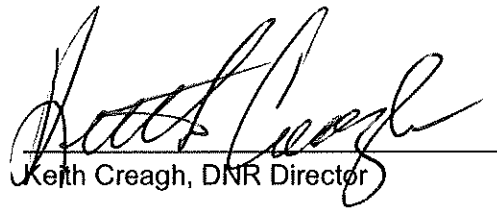
**Next Meeting**

Chairman **Matonich** announced that the next meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 2015, at the MSU Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health, 4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing. Committees meeting in April will be the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries, and the NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Advisory Committee.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner **Nichols** made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

APPROVED: Date: 5/7/15  
  
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John Matonich, NRC Chairman

  
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Keith Creagh, DNR Director

## **MINUTES**

### **NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

**April 9, 2015**

**MSU Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health  
4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing 48910**

#### **Present for the Natural Resources Commission**

John Matonich, chair  
Louise Klarr  
Christine Crumbaugh  
Vicki Pontz  
Tim Nichols  
Rex Schlaybaugh

#### **Present for DNR Staff**

Keith Creagh, DNR director  
Marc Miller, DNR regional initiatives deputy  
Bill Moritz, DNR natural resources deputy  
Stacy Welling Haughey, DNR UP regional coordinator  
Pam Stevenson, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General  
Cheryl Nelson, executive assistant to the NRC  
Other department staff

### **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

Chairman **John Matonich** called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. and called for a moment of silence in memory of Wildlife Division staffer **Mark Knee**.

**Oil and Gas Lease Auction** **Julie Manson and Kim Venne** shared that the next proposed oil and gas lease auction is on May 4 at the Lansing Center, there will be 130,000 acres in 19 counties up for auction.

**Parks and Trails Update** Parks and Recreation division chief, **Ron Olson**, talked about the funding being in place by next spring for the clubs/groups for grooming machines, Michigan Snowmobile and Trail Advisory Committee met this week, and that they are interested in having quarterly status report of action items in trail plan. Trails summit on Iron Belle took place, and was a very positive meeting. On April 18 there will be a dedication of the 42 mile non-motorized Fred Meijer Clinton Ionia Shiawassee trail, part of the Mid-Michigan network of trails, when completed it will be a 125 mile long corridor. This was done with trust fund and private monies. In addition, the department is completing the acquisition Hartford to Paw-Paw trail, known as the Fruitbelt trail, an 11 mile corridor, which links up with Van Buren State Park, South Haven,

Kalamazoo, and leads to Kal-Haven trail. State Parks camp nights are up 11%. Silver Lake opened last weekend, many people were riding, and everything went smoothly. They had a booth at the buggy show a few weeks back and sold many recreation passports and ORV stickers. Many people interested in the emerging project/partnership in Oakland County to develop an ORV area there.

**Aquatic Habitat Grants** Fisheries division chief, **Jim Dexter**, told the commission that the director approved \$1.25 million for aquatic habitat grants this year. He provided a rundown of the grants that were approved. Dexter reminded that the source of the grant revenue comes from license fees.

**Bass Regulations Update** **Jim Dexter** noted that there have been seven months of the work process on this regulations issue, and added that many comments were received and that a large percentage of the public information received has pushed back against the department's original proposal. He added that it was a positive experience for everyone, and that the department listened to the public. The recommendation is for catch and immediate release statewide for this year. They are further committed to establish catch and delayed release in the early season in several small inland lakes for next year. There will be public meetings over the summer. Dexter added that they will be working with bass groups to upgrade tournament information system for reporting back.

**Master Angler Program Update** **Tami Pattison**, from the Fisheries division, described Lean Process Improvement, which **Suzanne Ebright** took part in. A project within the division was identified and she had to see how it flows and suggest improvements. They chose the Master Angler Program. **Pattison** provided an update on how the process worked and how they improved it to make it easier for anglers. The program had length and weight requirements, in scaling down the program, they removed the weight requirement. There is an electronic form, and the angler may submit a picture electronically. Each angler receives a patch and there are certificates for the top five fish in each category annually. With this improved process they feel they will see increased participation.

**Fire Season Report** Forest Resources division chief, **Bill O'Neill**, stated that the season has started and the fire program is in a continuous state of improvement with updates to machinery. The department protects almost 30 million acres of state and private land. Forest Resources division trains and partners with volunteer fire departments. The department responds to an average of 500 wildfires every season, with 75% being on private land. **O'Neill** provided information on the 2015 season to date. He also discussed the prescribed burns program, noting that this is done for habitat enhancement. **O'Neill** talked about the wildfire prevention that the division does. **O'Neill** also shared information about the forest fire experiment station, noting that the department is the leader in fire prevention equipment design in the United States. The division has issued 791 pieces of equipment to assist 410 rural fire departments.

**Forestlands/Timber Report** Bill O'Neill stated that Michigan is a very stable supplier of wood fiber, almost one million cords per year, and the department has over \$100 million dollars on contract. O'Neill talked about wood supply and noted that it provides for wildlife and fish habitat, work with wildlife managing habitat. It is also the backdrop for Pure Michigan and for trails, there are over 12,000 miles of trails and over 560 miles of forest looped trails. He spoke of the quality of life and economic support for northern Michigan communities. O'Neill added that we attract the best and brightest people to Michigan by having public forests where people can have the outdoor experiences that attract and retain young professionals.

**Economics Study – GAP Analysis** Bill Moritz provided information on the workgroup asking the question, how do we best collect information to describe what we do. Moritz talked about different types of economic data, economic contributions to the economy as a whole. He also talked about economic impacts, and economic values; values that are important to the people. The group is currently working on identifying the best way to spend some resources to get the critical data for today and the longer term.

**Legislative Report** Trevor VanDyke, Legislative and Legal Affairs Office Director, provided a written report of legislation related to the department. In addition to the written report, VanDyke provided updates on recent legislative highlights.

**Shikar Safari Officer of the Year** Gunnar Klarr, International Representative of Shikar Safari presented Conservation Officer Ken Kovach of St. Clair County with this award.

### **PUBLIC APPEARANCES**

(Stacy Welling Haughey read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances which began at 4:19 p.m.)

Dan Kimmel, Michigan BASS Nation, feels that emotion won out over science with the latest bass season proposal. He adds that there is no reason for Lake St. Clair bass to not be healthy for the foreseeable future; option 4 came as adaptive management idea. He stated that the bass federations will never get fair bass fishing opportunities as long as emotion, personal opinions and the old, overly conservative way of doing things win over sound science.

Dave Reault, president, Bass Federation of Michigan, said that catch and immediate release will be a huge benefit to the anglers and that he appreciates the commission getting to that point. Reault wants to work with Fisheries on catch and delayed release program and he would like to see Fisheries move forward with outreach to the general angling public. He points out Wisconsin opens up season the first Saturday in May, in Green Bay, best bass fishery in the country, open to both largemouth and smallmouth bass.

**Chauncey Moran**, talked about protections on river water sheds. He would like the commission to say yes to a Michigan River Hero at the state level, to award an individual for their passion to the Upper Peninsula's watersheds.

**Amy Trotter**, MUCC, told the commission that she was disappointed and frustrated with the bass and the bear proposals. She feels the commission has chosen to listen to a small minority, a few bear hunters, and some people from the Lake St. Clair area. **Trotter** feels bass proposal is risk averse, it's taking small steps towards expanded opportunity and they want to be part of the conversation, especially about Lake St. Clair. With bear regulations, she talked about amending stakeholder and DNR recommendations and hopes that the desired harvest isn't exceeded. For the bass regulations, **Trotter** appreciates the catch and immediate release season. She wants a model for bass and will continue to have discussions to see how we can prioritize some attention focus and funding to do that. In regard to small game, and elevated platforms, they are happy to see that moving forward.

**Gary Towns**, retired fisheries biologist, talked about new bass studies, and about the present opener which protects spawn. He also mentioned the catch and delayed release study expanding, genetics has to be included.

**Richard P. Smith** stated that he was pleased with earlier discussion and encouraged the NRC to go back to all 2014 bear quotas for all of the Upper Peninsula.

**Chairman Matonich** adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 4:44 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 4:45 p.m. He noted that all commissioners who were present at the Committee of the Whole were present for the regular meeting.

#### **REGULAR MEETING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

#### **FOR INFORMATION ONLY NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

**Small Game and Upland Game Bird Regulations, Wildlife Conservation Order No. 3 of 2015**

**Bear Damage Shooting Permit Regulations, Wildlife Conservation Order No. 4 of 2015**

### **NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Approval of Minutes, March 19, 2015 Natural Resources Commission Meeting**

Chairman **Matonich** made a statement describing the Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act and what authorities it will now allow the commission to exercise.

Commissioner **Nichols** made a motion that the minutes of the March 19, 2015, NRC meeting be approved. Commissioner **Crumbaugh** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **Natural Resources Commission Policy Review Recommendations**

Commissioner **Nichols** moved that the Natural Resources Commission Policy Review Recommendations be adopted. Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **Bear Regulations and License Quotas, Wildlife Conservation Order No. 2 of 2015**

As discussed during the Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries, Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved to amend Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 2 of 2015, Bear Regulations and License Quotas, to include a total of 1,490 licenses available in the Baraga bear management unit and 1,090 licenses available in the Bergland bear management unit. He recommended these quotas based on information requested of the department in order to achieve the same desired harvest in these units as in 2014. Commissioner **Nichols** supported the motion to amend. **Matonich** called for discussion on the amendment, **Schlaybaugh** noted that even if the amendment is adopted there will be a 12% reduction in overall license numbers for the Upper Peninsula and there will not be a substantial change in population dynamics. Part of the bear management strategy in the Upper Peninsula appears to increase total number of bears on the landscape, **Mason** advised that this would not change this desired outcome and only modestly slow the rate of growth. It will continue to provide additional opportunity. **Pontz** questioned why this shouldn't take place across the entire Upper Peninsula. She would like to see the new modeling efforts in place before this type of adjustment is made. There was also discussion that took place between **Schlaybaugh** and **Crumbaugh** regarding why the amendment does not cover the entire Upper Peninsula. **Matonich** called for a vote on the amendment only, a vote was taken; **Pontz** voted no on the amendment, all others voted in favor, the amendment was approved. Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that Wildlife Conservation Order No. 2 of 2015, Bear Regulations and License Quotas, as amended, be adopted, Commissioner **Nichols** seconded the motion, **Matonich** called for a vote, Commissioner **Pontz** voted no, all others voted in favor; the order, as amended was adopted.

**Fisheries Order 200.15A, Statewide Trout, Salmon, Whitefish, Lake Herring, and Smelt Regulations**

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that the Fisheries Order 200.15A, Statewide Trout, Salmon, Whitefish, Lake Herring and Smelt Regulations be adopted. Commissioner **Nichols** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

**Fisheries Order 202.15, Special Hook Size Fishing Regulations**

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that the Fisheries Order 202.15, Special Hook Size Fishing Regulations be adopted. Commissioner **Nichols** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

**Fisheries Order 204.15, Spawning Closures**

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that the Fisheries Order 204.15, Spawning Closures be adopted. Commissioner **Nichols** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

**Fisheries Order 206.15, Special Fishing Regulations for Warmwater Species on Select Waters**

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that the Fisheries Order 206.15 Special Fishing Regulations for Warmwater Species on Select Waters be adopted. Commissioner **Nichols** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

**Fisheries Order 215.15, Statewide Coolwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch, Sunfishes and White Bass**

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that the Fisheries Order 215.15, Statewide Coolwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch, Sunfishes and White Bass be adopted. Commissioner **Nichols** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, **Schlaybaugh** added several comments regarding the long and difficult process taken for this order, noting they did not want any adverse effect to the resource. As for changing the season dates or having catch and delayed release on Lake St. Clair, trying to increase angler opportunity, he discussed the process that they will be using to determine, adding that Fisheries division will be coming back in September, after the public meetings, with a list of lakes where they can work on the population dynamics. This order protects the resource. **Pontz** commended the staff and

stakeholders proving how much people care about the resource. She thinks it is a good idea to move forward with a pilot program. A vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **Fisheries Order 249.15, Crayfish Regulations**

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that the Fisheries Order 249.15, Crayfish Regulations be adopted. Commissioner **Crumbaugh** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **DIRECTOR - ACTION ITEMS**

Director **Creagh** then listed the "Director's Action" items noted on the agenda and indicated that he would approve all items.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee**

Commissioner **Klarr** said that it was a great meeting this morning, very interesting, with a great agenda, they did pass one resolution; 4-2015, in support of the department moving forward on the Bay City Recreation Area Lakefront and Beach Access Study.

##### **NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries**

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** provided a brief synopsis of the events of today's committee meeting.

#### **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

- Commissioner **Crumbaugh** appreciates stakeholders and commissioners, DNR staff for getting her integrated into the commission.
- Commissioner **Klarr** took a tour of Pte. Mouillee, a tour of Belle Isle and the Outdoor Adventure Center recently, along with attending the all-staff meeting at Schoolcraft College.
- Commissioner **Nichols** commented that information provided in both subcommittee meetings today from the staff was outstanding.
- Chairman **Matonich** shared that he attended the Michigan Bear Hunter's conference along with commissioners **Pontz** and **Richardson**, noting that the presentations were very good, and he will be attending the Northwest Chapter's SCI banquet.